



# Healthy and active school communities

A RESOURCE KIT FOR SCHOOLS

**PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE IN HEALTHY EATING  
AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**



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Healthy and Active School Communities, A Resource Kit for Schools

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## QUALITY HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

### PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

To promote good practice in healthy eating and physical activity for children and young people schools can:

- adopt the Health Promoting Schools Framework—ie develop school health policies, the curriculum, the school's physical and social environment, links with the health sector, and partnerships with the local community to support good practice.
- ensure that school curricula, practices and policies incorporate healthy eating and physical activity in fun and creative ways.
- provide strong leadership within the school and support key people as project champions.
- create linkages with parents and the broader community.
- reorient the support of institutions, community groups and organisations towards school activities.
- make use of existing national dietary and physical activity guidelines and resources (eg Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and the National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children and Youth).
- recognise the vital role of schools as leaders in the promotion of physical activity and healthy eating.



## STRATEGIES AND EXAMPLE ACTIONS

### Implement school policies and standards that support healthy eating and active living:

- Implement food and healthy eating policies (eg policies and standards related to the school canteen, nutrition-related curriculum, the presence of vending machines within school grounds and fundraising activities).
- Implement physical activity policies (eg policies and standards related to participation in physical education and sport, duration and content of physical education curriculum, use of school grounds and equipment both during and after school hours).
- Promote the integrity of the school canteen by integrating nutrition-related policies, curriculum, dietary guidelines and foods available for consumption.

### Provide professional development opportunities for teachers and other support staff to teach and promote healthy eating and active living:

- Provide teachers, canteen managers and associated staff with training on nutrition, food safety and food handling.

### Develop healthy eating and physical education curricula:

- Incorporate and integrate physical activity and healthy eating into overall curriculum.
- Ensure that adequate time is spent on developing fundamental motor skills and in the promotion of all-abilities participation.
- Develop curriculum activities that aim to reduce excessive viewing of electronic media (eg Internet, electronic games, television).

### Disseminate information (and, where possible, develop knowledge and skills) about healthy eating and active living for parents:

- Provide parents with information on healthy food choices, nutrition and active living.
- Support or endorse community-based opportunities for parents to develop life skills in areas such as cooking on a budget, food preparation.

### **Build community relationships:**

- **Link with and support local food growers and providers in both the education of students (eg providing students with knowledge on fresh produce) and in the sale of healthy food choices (through the school canteen).**
- **Create and sustain supportive relationships with local service providers, shopkeepers and clubs, who can help promote healthy eating and active living.**

### **Promote consumption of fruit and vegetables:**

- **Develop school vegetable gardens.**
- **Provide subsidised fruit and vegetables in the school canteen.**
- **Offer regular snack breaks students to consume fruit and vegetables.**
- **Maximise opportunities to introduce students to fresh produce.**

### **Promote healthy drinks:**

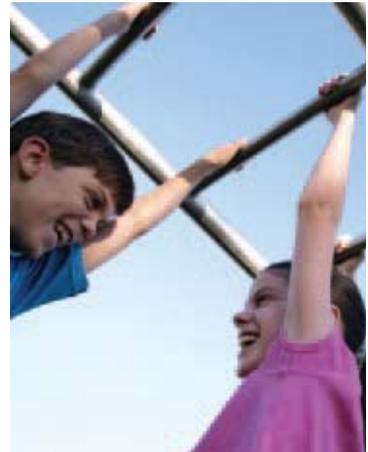
- **Ensure access to and encourage the consumption of water at school (eg including water breaks during classes or allowing students to bring water bottles to classes).**
- **Reduce or limit access to high energy drink vending machines on school property.**
- **Develop policies to promote water consumption and to discourage consumption of high energy drinks.**

### **Encourage active breaks and active living:**

- **Facilitate a school environment that is conducive to active living (eg walking paths around school ovals, adequate playground facilities, access to equipment and teacher encouragement of physical activity).**
- **Develop policies to promote active living during school hours.**

### **Support active transport:**

- **Facilitate a community-based response to active transport (eg gaining involvement and support of parents, local council and other suitable groups).**
- **Encourage and promote initiatives such as the Walking School Bus, Safe Routes to School, Bike and Road Education.**



### **The school:**

A primary school in New South Wales with approximately 570 students.

### **What they did:**

The school has implemented a physical activity and healthy eating program.

### **What worked:**

The physical activity program has two specialist physical education (PE) teachers who are also specialist science and technology teachers. The teachers are able to address both the physiological and the practical aspects of physical activity. This flexibility can be useful, particularly when the weather is inclement and scheduled PE classes are impractical.

The school regularly participates in gala days, and supports students in teams competing with other school teams in round-robin sporting events, as part of the Primary Schools Sports Association sporting competitions.

The school canteen operates five days per week for recess and lunch and is managed by two paid supervisors. The canteen participates in the award system devised by the NSW School Canteen Association, which aims to promote and facilitate the provision of a nutritious and healthy food service in school canteens. The canteen achieved diamond award status, provided to schools that receive a gold rating for three consecutive years.

### **What helped:**

- The quality and skills of the teachers.
- The belief of teachers and the school community in the value of doing the programs.
- Human and physical resources.
- Caters for the entire student population and students are motivated to participate.
- Enjoyable program that is well taught and integrated into the whole school.

skills  
quality  
belief  
resources  
value  
integration

# 2 *physical activity*

## **The school:**

A primary school in South Australia with approximately 600 students.

## **What they did:**

The school identified that health and physical activity was a priority for the school community and developed a strategic plan. In line with this plan, the school has implemented a range of activities aimed at promoting student participation in physical activity.

## **What worked:**

A dedicated sports coordinator is employed two days a week. Through the sports coordinator, the school has made links with local community groups, such as the bowling club and aquatic centre. As a result, students are able to participate in a range of activities and sports clinics, and utilise local community facilities to which they might not otherwise have had access. The sports coordinator also leads a range of lunchtime events such as dance clubs, frisbee throwing, golf days and walking.

In addition, the school has invested in additional resources for use by the students (eg equipment, games painted on to the concrete).

The school actively promotes physical activity as an integral part of family life. For example, the school is trialing the introduction of sports homework and students are sent home with tasks to do with their families. The school newsletter also promotes the benefits of regular physical activity.

A group of parents successfully applied for funds to increase parent participation in the school. One of the events they organised was a 'Life. Be In It' activities day for families.

## **What helped:**

- Having a staff member dedicated to the role of sports coordinator.
- Support of school staff.
- School leadership support.
- High profile given to the issue and supported by parents.
- Whole of school approach.
- Children enjoy the program and support it.
- Parents actively support the program.

skills  
leadership  
support  
parents  
dedication  
culture

### **The school:**

A primary school with approximately 230 students, located in a low socioeconomic area in Western Australia.

### **What they did:**

The school aims to create an environment that maximizes the learning potential of students and seeks to raise knowledge and awareness through encouraging good healthy eating and physical activity practices.

### **What worked:**

Healthy eating, hydration and regular physical activity are encouraged throughout the day to ensure students maintain adequate levels of glucose, oxygen and hydration.

Water bottles are included on the students' book and equipment list and students are encouraged to have their own water bottles with them in classes each day. In addition, fruits, vegetables and nuts may be consumed during class times (processed foods, such as muesli bars, are not permitted).

Students participate in a daily physical activity program, with events that are designed to increase cardiovascular fitness. Sessions run for approximately 15–20 minutes each morning.

The program includes regular physical education classes. For grades prep to two, two hours per week is allocated to physical education. Grades three to four have three hours per week, and grades five to seven have between three and four hours per week.

As a result of the program, it has been noted that the classroom atmosphere is quieter, with improved student concentration.

### **What helped:**

- Whole of staff commitment.
- Linking of the initiatives to a valid purpose.
- Persistence and consistency.
- Rewarding and encouraging students to adopt healthy behaviours.
- Ongoing communication with the school community.

skills  
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integration

# 4 *physical activity*

## **The school:**

A primary school in rural Victoria with approximately 120 students.

## **What they did:**

The school has a whole-school commitment to physical activity with a focus on physical education and sports. The school has adopted a Health Promoting Schools Framework, is involved with Active Australia, and promotes physical education and healthy eating through a newsletter.

## **What worked:**

The program includes a 30-minute physical activity session at 9.00 am each morning. In this period, students participate in a range of age-specific events. For example, the prep students learn fundamental motor skills. In addition, each class participates in a 50-minute physical education session and senior students also receive 60 minutes of sports education per week.

A part of the Sport and Physical Education Program students are introduced to a different sport each term, learning about coaching, scoring, umpiring and playing. There is a focus on active participation. Local sporting clubs, with whom the school has forged strong links, offer students some coaching clinics. The school promotes school-based teams for an after-school sports program held at local venues.

The school also established an event, in which classes regularly record, tally and convert their physical activity into kilometres travelled around Australia. Classes track their progress in kilometres on a map of Australia, learning about towns as they travel through them. Staff members are involved in a similar quest, in competition with three other schools in the area.

## **What helped:**

- Staff commitment to initiate and maintain activities.
- Community support and recognition.
- Resources (eg time, money).
- Whole of school involvement.
- Interest of students.
- The Sport and Physical Education Program.
- Teaching students early motor skills.
- Parent support.

skills  
leadership  
support  
parents  
dedication  
culture

## The school:

A primary school in New South Wales with approximately 328 students.

## What they did:

The school promotes the fitness and skill levels of students by engaging them in physical activity. The program seeks to develop students' 12 fundamental movement skills.

## What worked:

In 2002, the school received funding through the Premier's Gold Medal Fitness Program to enhance the programs that they provided to students. The funding was used to provide support and professional training to develop teachers' skills and confidence in teaching physical education skills and use of physical education related equipment. In addition, as part of the program, assessment sheets were used to monitor the performance of students and the school as a whole.

Students participate in physical activity lessons twice a week. The program is sequential, progressively building on students' skills. One lesson per week is dedicated to skill development; the second lesson is on sports activity. For students in kindergarten to grade two the lessons are 40 minutes duration, and 45 minutes for the remaining grades. Students also participate in other games and events throughout the year, both curricular and non-curricular.

It is important to note that students in the middle grades (three and four) compete only in school-based events, whereas students in the senior grades (five and six) develop sportsmanship by participating in inter-school competitions.

## What helped:

- Training and development of teachers.
- Teachers are provided with appropriate level of support.
- Appropriate lesson resources are provided.
- Group culture and good communication (all staff were supportive of the initiative).
- The program is sequential and progressively teaches students skills.
- Easy to follow program that does not require special training.
- Parent involvement.
- Focus on student enjoyment and achievements.

skills  
leadership  
support  
parents  
dedication  
culture

# 6 *healthy eating*

## **The school:**

A secondary school in rural Queensland with approximately 480 students.

## **What they did:**

The school identified that the incidence of coronary heart disease within the community was of concern, and decided to address the issue by implementing the Making Healthy Eating an Easy and Informed Choice program. The program aims to make it easier for students to make healthy, nutritious choices from the school canteen.

## **What worked:**

The school has used a variety of means to promote healthy eating including curriculum, teacher leadership and policy directives.

When hosting the regional sports carnival, the senior students (years 11 and 12) had a stall where they sold healthy foods (eg fresh fruits). The students were responsible for all aspects of the stall, including menu planning, food ordering, preparation, and selling. The stall was a huge success and sold out of its goods.

Senior students also participate in a surveying process to monitor the health-related decision-making processes of students from other year levels. In addition to providing students with practical data management skills, it also alerts them to the current health-related practices of their peers.

The years eight to ten students participate in a program titled Box 'em, Sell 'em and Eat 'em. Students prepare lunches that are sold to the teaching staff each week, developing students' skills in menu planning, food ordering, preparation and selling.

## **What helped:**

- School staff support for, and involvement in, the initiatives.
- Enlightened and supportive administrative staff.
- Achieving change in the canteen menu.
- Member of staff with a health promotion background.
- Student involvement and awareness.
- Increased participation in physical activity.

change  
awareness  
support  
sponsors  
dedication  
passion

# physical activity 7

## The school:

A primary school with approximately 450 students, located in a high socioeconomic area in the Australian Capital Territory.

## What they did:

The school has an extensive after-school activities program, with physical activity as an integral component. In addition to the after-school program and daily games-oriented activity programs run by teachers, the school has two specialist physical education teachers, both of whom are employed part-time.

skills  
leadership  
support  
parents  
dedication  
culture

## What worked:

For the after-school program, teachers or contracted after-school care employees conduct activities including pottery, French, music lessons and horse riding. The average session costs between \$2 and \$6 and is run on a weekly basis. The sporting activities require considerable parent support to provide transport, coaching and support to the teams. The teams participate in Saturday morning competitions as well as lunchtime competitions against other schools. In the competition events, the primary school sources umpires from the high school student body. The emphasis is on participation as opposed to competition.

The specialist physical education teachers have developed a tight, sequential program for each class for two sessions a week. As a result of the school's approach to active recreation and physical education, students' skills are improving, leading to greater personal confidence and sense of success.

In previous years, the school participated in the Smartstart program. The program measured student aerobic fitness, flexibility, percent body fat, agility and so on. Parents were not required to pay fees, as the school absorbed program costs. The program provided the school with both composite and individual data on students, and guidance about possible curriculum areas for development. Parents could elect to purchase a basic report or a more in-depth report that provided information about their child and possible dietary and nutritional advice.

## What helped:

- Staff expertise, dedicated positions.
- Flexible programming.
- Parental support.
- Whole of school involvement.
- Involvement in the primary schools sports association.
- Support from the school leadership.
- Consistency—run each year for each year level.

# CARD 8 *healthy eating & physical activity*

## **The school:**

A primary school in Victoria with approximately 400 students.

## **What they did:**

The school has made healthy eating and physical activity a priority since 1999 and has implemented several different interventions.

## **What worked:**

The school provides all students with classroom-based healthy eating programs. In grade three, students focus on growing produce and tending the school vegetable garden. The school encourages consumption of fruit and vegetables within class and water bottles are permitted in some classes, with a view to implementing school-wide use of water bottles in classes in 2004.

The school canteen is open two days a week, providing nutritious food choices to students. The canteen operator monitors food choices made by students. The school regularly seeks feedback on the canteen and its food range from parents and senior students.

The school regularly invites guest speakers to promote healthy lifestyle messages to students. The school recognises the value of developing parental awareness of the need for action and support for change. It runs regular newsletter items promoting healthy eating. At whole school events, the parent committee provides students with fruit platters and healthy snacks and, at the school disco, water is the only beverage served.

The school encourages participation in active forms of recreation and promotes student participation in sport both inside and outside of school hours. It has built a 480-metre running/walking track this is also a valuable facility for use by the wider community. The school has established strong links with local sporting clubs and offers students a wide range of sporting activities.

## **What helped:**

- Developing parental awareness of the need for action and support for change.
- Having a combined team effort to promote/sell the key messages to students.
- Making it fun, doing things in the school that were visible.
- Viewed as a whole-school initiative, therefore all staff members are supportive.
- Achieving change in the school canteen menu.
- Students' enthusiasm.
- Consumption of fruit in class time.
- Introduction of walking track that is also used outside of school hours.

skills  
quality  
belief  
resources  
value  
integration

## The school:

A school in Victoria that spans grade prep to twelve, with approximately 650 students, about 100 of whom are located on an annex external to the main school grounds. The school is located in a low socioeconomic area and has a large culturally and linguistically diverse student population.

## What they did:

For many years the school tried with little success to engage students in learning about healthy eating. However, with a change of approach and a shift in emphasis from 'nutrition education' to 'education of the palate' it has achieved significant outcomes.

The program aims to teach students in grades three to six to cultivate fresh produce and prepare nutritious and tasty foods. Students are encouraged to diversify their knowledge and appreciation of foods, and develop a sense of ease with food choice and preparation.

## What worked:

The concept, adapted from a model from the USA, was introduced to the school by the well-known chef, Stephanie Alexander. The school found that having sponsorship and support as well as a high profile sponsor of the program were important factors contributing to the success of this intervention.

Students are responsible for a vegetable garden including planting, composting, natural pest prevention, etc. The students harvest the produce and, in small groups, are taught to prepare a meal by a chef and parent volunteers. At the end of the lesson students join the chef, teacher, parents and peers to eat the meal.

Students develop skills in cooking, food cultivation, and eating out at places other than fast-food outlets. Students learn about ingredients and preparation of different foods and practice skills such as listening, maths and social interaction.

As a result of the program, families report major changes in children's eating habits, with many students preferring to shop for grocery items on their way home from school to cook, rather than eating at fast-food outlets. In addition, as a result of the activities associated with the program, such as sitting together and sharing a meal, the teachers have developed better relationships with students.

## What helped:

- Passionate nature of the key people involved with the program.
- Having a well-known patron of the program.
- The authentic learning skills that the students develop.
- Students' enjoyment of the program.
- Staff and community involvement and support.
- Sponsorship and support.

change  
awareness  
support  
sponsors  
dedication  
passion

Healthy and active school communities

# CARD 10 *healthy eating & physical activity*

## **The school:**

A primary school with approximately 100 students in a rural area of South Australia.

## **What they did:**

The school has developed both a healthy eating and a physical activity program.

## **What worked:**

A few years ago parents and staff became concerned about the nutritional choices of students. After some consultation, the school instigated a water and healthy snack policy, allowing students to consume both within class time.

An external supplier offers lunches one day a week for purchase by students. Menus are vetted by the school council. During terms two and three, parents come to the school on a Friday to reheat healthy foods brought from home so that students can have a hot meal. The school also has fridges in each of the classrooms, so children can store foods safely.

One morning a week the school operates a 'walking school bus', a program that aims to encourage students to walk to and/or from school in a group. The 'bus' travels along a set route, picking up or dropping off students along the way. The bus is led by a 'driver', with a 'conductor' following behind the group. Approximately 20–25 students participate in the program. Benefits for students include increased physical activity, safe travel to school, more time interacting and socialising with peers and increased road safety knowledge.

The school received Active for Life funding. The school uses a local gymnasium for physical education classes and many sporting clinics (such as hockey, dance, etc).

The school has a strong role-modelling program. For example, the school principal participates in different weekly lunchtime sporting events, chosen by students at the start of each term.

As part of a health education activity, the older students (grades six and seven) research games to teach to their peers.

The junior primary school teacher trains students to use the playground equipment safely and correctly.

The school also seeks considerable student involvement in preparation and planning for sports activities, looking at alternatives to traditional team games in order to increase participation.

## **What helped:**

- Parent support and cooperation.
- Staff knowledge, support and attitudes.
- Funding (Active for Life).
- Student enthusiasm and support.
- Motivation to undertake initiatives.

skills  
quality  
belief  
resources  
value  
integration

## The school:

A primary school with approximately 700 students, in a low socioeconomic area of South Australia.

## What they did:

The school received Active for Life funding, through the South Australian Government, to increase participation in physical activity, improve the quality of physical activity offered, and improve students attitudes towards physical activity. The school also has a strong healthy eating program within a Health Promoting Schools approach.

## What worked:

The school takes a strong and pro-active approach to participation. Students are encouraged to engage in local sporting and general interest clubs and groups, with a view to promoting sustained, lifelong participation through connection to broader community life outside the school setting. For example, students participate in golfing events with the local golf club, surf with the members of the local surf life saving club and go orienteering with the local orienteering club. These activities are typically offered to secondary school students and so provide a rare opportunity for younger children.

Students are exposed to a variety of sports through clinics, for example in tennis, basketball and rugby.

The school has participated in the National Child Nutrition Program, working with local Aboriginal community groups and dietitians from the community health service. As part of the Eat Fresh Program, the school formed links with the local fruit and vegetable supplier to provide fruit for fortnightly fruit-tasting events for students in reception to grade five. The students from the special education unit at the school visited the fruit and vegetable supplier on a weekly basis, learning about food selection, preparation and tastes.

The students have a strong voice in planning and decision-making within the school. For example, when senior students requested new play equipment they were tasked with designing what they would like. The school then had the equipment manufactured. As part of its Health Promoting Schools approach, the school is currently reviewing the foods available in the school canteen. The student representative council is involved in this process.

## What helped:

- Money (the Active for Life funding).
- Time to focus activities outside of the classroom.
- The drive and enthusiasm of students.
- Community support, involvement and enthusiasm.
- Links with local community health centres and specialist staff members.
- Well resourced.
- Support from the school leadership.
- Ongoing nutritional education to parents via the school newsletter.
- Practical, enjoyed by the students.

skills  
quality  
belief  
resources  
value  
integration

# 12 *healthy eating*

## **The school:**

An Indigenous community preschool in Queensland with 45 students.

## **What they did:**

The preschool received Australian Government funding for a healthy eating program as part of the National Child Nutrition Program. The aim of the program is to improve the long-term eating patterns of children 0–12 years and pregnant women. The preschool has adopted a holistic approach that links education, health and social services to achieve the best outcomes for students. Under the program, a project officer with a dietetics background is employed for two days a week to work with families.

The intervention is a community-owned, community-guided process that is student-driven. The preschool has a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach to health and welfare. It recognises the many difficulties faced by parents, including accessing health services and transport, and maintaining health records. The preschool tries to bring services into the preschool. The community elder encourages everyone to use such services, including extended family members.

## **What worked:**

Children attending the preschool normally travel for up to an hour by bus to get there. Many are from single parent families, have a history of significant family and social problems, and live in public housing in areas where little or no public transport is available.

Teachers observed that many children were arriving at school without breakfast. To address this issue, the preschool began a program that served children breakfast but changed it in order to maximise the educational benefits to the children. In each of the classrooms, the students are provided with foodstuffs (such as bread) and equipment (such as microwaves and toasters) and learn to get their own breakfast independently with supervision by a staff member. Students are encouraged to ask parents to buy nutritious food items when shopping for groceries so that the students can use their food preparation skills at home.

The preschool made links with the local university (School of Human Movement and the managers of the sports and recreation facilities) to offer the children swimming lessons. Parents started attending so the preschool successfully applied for funding to engage parents in physical activity events. As a result, the university offers 'come along and try' programs, such as pilates, to parents. Staff members of the preschool have also become more pro-active with respect to their own physical activity levels by joining the university gym, and have negotiated with the gym for an additional membership that the parents can use and share.

An unexpected outcome of the program is that parents have learned about nutritious foods from their children.

## **What helped:**

- Involvement and participation of community members.
- Funding.
- Holistic approach to health and welfare.
- Program consistency.
- Education and lifestyle components are included.
- Parent participation.
- Promotion of healthy lifestyle and nutrition.

change  
awareness  
support  
sponsors  
dedication  
passion

**The school:**

A special school in the Australian Capital Territory that caters for approximately 70 students aged 9 to 16 years of age with intellectual disabilities.

**What they did:**

In developing its physical activity program, the school was very aware that students with intellectual disabilities are potentially most at risk of becoming isolated and physically inactive, particularly once they have left the school environment.

skills  
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parents  
dedication  
culture

**What worked:**

At the start of the school year, a physical education teacher records the height and weight of each student and measures aerobic fitness. Throughout the year, aerobic fitness tests are conducted. Students who make significant improvements during the year are rewarded with a small gift as an acknowledgment of their efforts.

Every morning, students participate in a morning welcome session, which concludes with a five-minute dance session. The students have one, 1 1/2-hour session of physical education per week. Students are also offered a dance elective one afternoon a week. Each fortnight years nine and ten students go to the local YMCA and participate in rock-climbing and other physical fitness activities.

Each week the students participate in activities such as gymnastics, trampolining, and weights at the local Police Citizens Youth Centre. The students may also pay a \$2 membership fee to attend the centre outside of school hours. Advantages for the students include increased physical fitness, something to do, and improved relationships with the police.

The school has implemented a program to develop students' range of work-related skills and experiences. At a local horse farmer's property, students learn such skills as tree planting, fence fixing, etc.

The school offers the Primary After-Schools Sports Program, in which students learn a range of team sports through linking with outside community groups.

The school's Echo Garden to Canteen program has a whole-school focus with students learning to tend a vegetable garden and chickens. The school canteen uses the produce or sells it within the school or broader community. In the school's Canteen Capers program, students work once a week in the canteen, preparing lunch for the staff and students. The cost is minimal so that as many students as possible can afford to buy a lunch. The participants of the program receive a 50% discount.

The school became aware that some students were coming to school without breakfast and therefore started a breakfast program. In addition, once a week staff members bring a piece of fruit to school. The fruit is then diced and served to all students in an ice-cream cone.

**What helped:**

- Persistence and willingness to change.
- Staff support / team effort.
- Commitment of the parents and the school board.
- Enthusiasm of staff and students to the program.
- Success in obtaining grants.
- Involvement of all staff.

# 14 *healthy eating*

## The school:

A primary school in Queensland with a 70% turnover rate of students and issues associated with a transient population. For example, at the start of the 2003 school year there were 350–400 students compared to 250 students when the school was surveyed in August 2003.

## What they did:

The school recognised that many of the needs of students were beyond the scope of the education sector and formed a partnership with Queensland Health and a community renewal association. Together the partnership applied for and received Australian Government funding for its Eat Well, Feel Well, Work Well initiative. The group was later incorporated, with a board of trustees, to enable it to receive funding. The approach is collaborative, with considerable time invested in developing common understandings. The program is being evaluated externally by a university.

The aim of the initiative is to influence the eating patterns of families in the community and to build capacity. The project is part of the school's Health Promoting Schools Framework and includes in-service training for staff members and the development of school healthy eating and physical activity policies. Many of the interventions are embedded into the school's curriculum to ensure sustainability.

## What worked:

Activities under way within the school include:

- The school's fruit bowl initiative aims to increase fruit consumption. Children bring a piece of fruit to school everyday to share, placing it in the fruit bowl. Parent volunteers use the fruit to prepare a platter for students to eat in the afternoons.
- Students are allowed to eat fruits and nuts in the first session in the morning and are encouraged to drink water during classes.
- The school has a 'kids' café', where the senior students cook food for the rest of the school and learn about menu planning, food handling, cooking and food safety.
- The school also has a healthy tuckshop menu.
- Participants in a 'work-for-the-dole' scheme are creating a vegetable patch for the school.
- The school offers classes for parents on cooking on a budget and has developed links with local fruit and vegetable sellers.

All students participate in physical education classes at least four days per week. Students in prep to grade four participate in two hours of physical education per week, grades five to seven in three hours per week.

Prior to the introduction of daily physical activity, the school had a 31% participation rate in inter-school sporting events, this has now increased to 63%.

## What helped:

- Having a person (project officer) dedicated to the job.
- The partnership between the agencies and their combined expertise.
- Staff goodwill and interest.
- Staff, student and parent willingness to adopt a new project.
- External evaluation by a University.

change  
awareness  
support  
sponsors  
dedication  
passion

### The school:

A primary school with approximately 320 students in a rural area of Tasmania.

### What they did:

The school has implemented a healthy eating program and an innovative physical activity program, which is run four days a week by grade six peer instructors.

### What worked:

The peer instructors (14 in total for 2003) are called Aussie Sports Leaders. Students elect to be part of the Aussie Sports Leaders program and are trained in group-management skills. The physical activities are rotated each week and are based on building aerobic capacity and coordination. In order to make this intervention effective, a considerable period of time was spent in identifying suitable areas within the school to hold the activities.

In addition to daily physical activity, the school employs a specialist physical education teacher to conduct one session a week with the students. For students in kindergarten to grade two this is one 30-minute session per week and, for grades three to six, one 45 minute session per week. During these classes the students experience a mix of activities such as dance, water awareness and sports carnival days.

The school has invested substantially in equipment. Each classroom has a set of equipment (eg balls, ropes, bats) that students can borrow and use during break times and the school also built three new sets of play equipment (eg monkey bars, slides).

The school also encourages participation in sporting team events. However, there is a policy that students below grade three do not participate in competitive sports. Parent volunteers coach the teams. Participation is out of school hours through local competitions.

The school canteen operates three days a week and employs a canteen manager. Because many parents are now working, the canteen is supported primarily by grade six student volunteers who have been trained in safe food-handling skills.

The canteen has been twice assessed at gold award status and is certified by the local council. It promotes nutritious and attractive foods and often designs lunch menus based on themes and special events (eg AFL grand final, healthy bones and suggestions from Student Council). Students learn menu creation as part of the health curriculum. A new menu is set each term and a copy sent home with the students. Parents send money to school, the order is written onto a lunch order bag and lunches are delivered to the classroom. The canteen also operates at recess and lunchtime as a tuckshop serving nutritious items.

### What helped:

- Leadership.
- Student participation.
- Parents informed along the way.
- Student centredness—the program is attractive to students.
- Whole of school involvement.
- Having the Aussie Sports Leaders.
- Having time dedicated to daily physical activity.
- Identifying suitable areas within the school to hold the activities.
- Minimal equipment required.
- Support of School Council, Canteen and Sports Committees

skills  
quality  
belief  
resources  
value  
integration

# 16 *healthy eating*

## The school:

A primary school, located in a rural, low socioeconomic area in Western Australia, with approximately 190 students all of whom are Indigenous.

## What they did:

The school canteen achieved a five-star rating as part of a voluntary State-based canteen accreditation system.

## What worked:

Schools operating healthy canteens are awarded a star rating of three, four or five stars similar to the rating standard used in other areas of hospitality and tourism. The program aims to increase the availability, promotion and sales in schools in Western Australia of healthier food choices consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.

Under the program, the school has successfully completed the required accredited training courses, has suitable canteen policies, meets the required food hygiene requirements, and 95% of the total food sales are on the recommended food lists with the remaining 5% of foods sold assessed on an individual basis for suitability. To achieve this rating, the school must also have one promotional event per term as well as two additional promotional events whereby the canteen and curriculum are linked. The school must also implement two other promotions (such as meal deals) each term for three consecutive terms.

The school has also set up a scheme with Centrelink whereby parents can pay for their children's lunches at the canteen through a direct debt of \$1.50 per day from their social services payments. The student receives a meat and salad sandwich or roll for lunch daily. If a student does not attend school on a particular day, this amount is credited and rolled over to the next school day.

The school has implemented a breakfast program with sponsorship from a local mining company. The breakfast program employs a local community member to prepare the food. Students are provided with milk, cereal, toast and fruit five mornings per week free of charge to students.

Diabetes is a significant problem in the school's local community and the school has undertaken initiatives to educate students and community members about the health issue. The school has participated in the Canning Stock Route Challenge (developed by the Western Australian Health Department). The Challenge encourages students to be physically active while they learn about diabetes. Classes 'travel' between wells on the Canning Stock Route by accumulating time spent being physically active (for example, 15 minutes of physical activity may equal the distance between two wells). At predetermined distances along the Canning Stock Route, students participate in diabetes-education classes.

The school is also involved in a community education program that seeks to educate people with diabetes about the types of foods they should be consuming. The strategy uses a colour-coded dinner plate to illustrate the proportions that should be consumed of different food groups. Students made posters depicting this, which are displayed throughout the community.

The local community became involved in the program and students developed an increased awareness of nutrition.

## What helped:

- Having a canteen manager dedicated to the school's initiatives.
- A supportive community that drives and is involved in the initiatives.
- Staff and student perseverance to the changes and ideas.
- Funding to support the program.
- Support from government agencies.
- Increased awareness in nutrition as a result of the initiative.
- Support of the school curriculum.

change  
awareness  
support  
sponsors  
dedication  
passion

